new masses

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A NEW COMINTERN?

by James S. Allen

TO THOSE WHO ARE SILENT

An open letter from Joseph North

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just a minute

LAST week this department discussed some of the problems NM has in getting suitable material for publication. One conclusion was that we have to get more writers and artists to participate. And the remark was made in passing that over the course of a year nearly a thousand bylines appear in our pages. That was something to think about—and we did. And as the wheels were turning the name of Phillip Bonosky came to mind.

Nothing unusual about that—his byline has appeared in our pages quite often. Over the past year or so he has been our most prolific contributor of short stories. Top-flight stories too; you remember some of them: "The Man Who Didn't Know How to Make Money" (*not* about an NM writer), "The Experts," "The Delegate," "The Big Black Willow" and last week "The Silent Revolutionist." As a writer he is the opposite of John O'Hara, whose new book of short stories was reviewed in NM a couple of weeks back by Lawrence Emery and of whom the critic wrote, "He doesn't care who kills the fly; he is preoccupied solely with the speck it leaves behind it." Phil writes about people—steel workers, miners and kids, and ex-WPA writers who made good in Hollywood—and they are real people. Not shadows in a barroom mirror or specks upon the glass.

Our writers are quite real people, too, but many of them, unfortunately, we never see and they are to us as they are to you—bylines. Not Phil. We see him often around our offices. He's in New York now — his home is in Western Pennsylvania — and he stops by frequently for a chat. But better: he gives us a hand with manuscripts which must be read and books which must be reviewed.

He's a young guy — thirty perhaps—chunky, slightly stooped, and his eyes are always laughing at something behind steel-rimmed glasses. Or maybe it's just a squint. Anyway it gives him a foxy-grandpa look which contrasts sharply with the small-boy blond hair which slips down over one eye. One day we spied him banging away on one of our old Royals—writing a short story. Now that's what we call having close relations with a writer.

Not so long ago he brought along his four-year-old son—a short short story, you could call him. And while his father busied himself with work the second-edition Bonosky busied us with questions. We got in one ourself and learned that his name was Danny. We also learned that it's handy to have at hand a carton of old engravers' cuts for such an occasion. They're fine for building houses and things.

But while we're waiting for Danny's first story—and we expect to be around till then—how about you other writers? And artists? Send us your stuff—stories, poems, articles, cartoons, drawings. And stop in to see us. The blocks are here for little Willie, too.

B. A. BOTKIN, who has an article in this issue, is a man who does things in a big way. His *Treasury of American Folklore,* published in 1944, was sold in more than half a million copies. This month his publishers are issuing a new book which he has compiled and edited. *A Treasury of New England Folklore* is a big work too—900 pages, with some 500 stories and songs. A couple of years ago Ben quit his job as Chief of the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress to study and travel in New England to gather the source material for his new book. It will be reviewed in an early issue.

AH, SWEET mystery of LIFE. But you'll see behind the camouflage of Henry Luce's magazine when you read the series of three articles which Charles Humboldt has written for NM.

A revealing light is thrown upon the evil which lurks behind the cheesecake and piety of one of the most powerful propaganda media of big business. You will read how history and morality are used by *Life* to defend monopoly and imperialism. Don't miss these articles—coming soon in NM.

WANTED: back numbers of NM for 1943 and especially the November 30 issue. Our office will appreciate it if any of our readers can supply us with these issues.

L. L. B.

new masses

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VOLUME LXV, NUMBER 4

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A New Comintern? James S. Allen 3
"You Can't Change Human Nature" Harari . . 5
How Would You Look Under Kleig Lights? Joseph North 6
"The Whipper" Carl Carter 8
D. C. Dateline A. L. J. 11
What I Think of New Masses Gerhart Eisler . . 13
The Folk-say of Freedom Songs B. A. Botkin . . 14
Portside Patter Bill Richards 16
Book Reviews: Composing for Films, by Hanns Eisler: S. Finkelstein; Linden on the Saugus Branch, by Elliot Paul: Sally Alford; The Way of the South, by Howard W. Odum: Herbert Aptheker; Struggle for Germany, by Russell Hill: Arthur D. Kahn; Green Memories, The Story of Geddes Mumford, by Lewis Mumford: Jose Yglesias 17
Theater Isidor Schneider 22

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A NEW COMINTERN?

"The specific needs of this postwar era have given rise to the new Communist bureau. . . ." A discussion of the nine-party Belgrade center and its meaning.

By JAMES S. ALLEN

Has the Comintern been revived? Is the nine-party Communist bureau that has been set up at Belgrade a European Comintern, with the implication that the old global International will be reestablished? I am afraid that too many are ready to accept this hasty appraisal of the new undertaking.

Some of the obvious aspects of the new center invalidate offhand the parallel with the old Comintern. Neither in its present setup nor in its program does the Belgrade center aim at world organization. Great mass Communist parties outside of Europe are not involved. Even from Europe not all the big or important parties are included, although some of these may in time adhere to the bureau.

Nor does the new organization undertake to establish a common policy on matters of organization and program, as the Comintern did. It is a center for the exchange of information and views, with the aim of obtaining a maximum mobilization of the Communist and democratic movements of Europe to defend their anti-fascist gains from aggressive imperialist intervention.

Without question cooperation for this end among the leading Communist parties of Europe will influence the course of world politics. But it is a mistake to think that this can take place only along the lines of the old Comintern, with respect both to means and policy. For the old Comintern is really dead. This is not said to disparage it. Like the two internationals that preceded it, the Comintern passed from the scene when it fulfilled its specific role. Events leading to the Second World War, and changes during the war, left the Comintern outmoded, as was frankly said when it was dissolved. Advocates of a new, warmongering anti-Comintern Axis, or even some muddleheads who lack a sense of history, see in the new event the resurrection of the Comintern. But each era brings new specific needs to the fore and produces its own forms of meeting these needs. The specific needs of this postwar era have given rise to the new Communist bureau, and it functions in a new context.

What are these needs? Some of these are supremely practical, but pressing. With the dissolution of the Comintern certain elementary forms of cooperation among like-minded parties also disappeared. During the war regular contact was almost impossible in any case. In the complex postwar situation, and in view of the leading role the Communists had come to play in many European countries, the resumption of some regular means of contact could no longer be postponed. Certain divergencies on this or that problem had crept up between parties of various countries. This lack of coordination hindered the maximum mobilization of the Communist and democratic forces of Europe.

Other European parties have similar coordination centers. The European Socialist Conference, organized last year under the leadership of the Labor government, sits in London. The Christian Democratic parties coordinate through the Vatican. Exiles from Eastern Europe have set up a so-called peasant center in the shadow of the State Department at Washington, and have issued a manifesto for a European insurrectionary international. And this is not to speak of the Wall Street Dollar International, with its branches and agents throughout Europe and the world.

Aside from the practical needs, what is the content and the aims of the new Communist bureau? The main Communist strength in Europe is represented in the Belgrade center. Its very composition suggests the political emphasis of the new organization. Besides the Soviet Communists, six of the participating parties are from the East European countries where the decisive turn has been made away from capitalist domination and to a popular democratic state. These link themselves with the mass parties of France and Italy, where a similar turn is the order of the day.

The information and coordinating

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center thus bases itself upon the great popular-democratic upsurge which already has such solid achievement to its credit. The participating parties bind themselves as the central core of defense, to safeguard this advance. They seek a maximum anti-imperialist and democratic front for this purpose, and also to encourage and lead a further progressive advance in Europe. Such an effort in Europe, the decisive arena of world politics, is bound to have an immediate and far-reaching effect upon European and world events.

In the policy statement issued by the new center no basic departure is to be found from the policies already developed by each of the participating parties. However, aside from its importance as a joint statement of policy, the declaration is significant because it places certain questions with greater precision. These involve chiefly the estimate of the relative strength of the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces and the question of war.

Some have seen fit to stress as the main import of the statement its emphasis upon the division of the world into two camps. From this they attempt to show that the Communists have now set a course for deepening this division, spreading chaos and preventing "recovery." Actually, the joint declaration merely states a reality of world development since the end of the war, which was rooted also in the divergent aims of the Allies in the war. This division between the imperialists and anti-fascists was clearly to be seen within every country, including our own. The postwar division has long since been recognized on all sides. Whatever understandings were reached or may still be attained on various problems of peace-making, these conflicting policies and currents have become the core of postwar politics.

What is important is the approach of the nine Communist parties to this cleavage, and toward the dangers of imperialist intervention and war arising from it. The first important conclusion to be drawn is that the leading Communist parties of Europe are working along the direct line of ascendancy from the great wartime resistance movements, the victory of the new democracies and the phenomenal growth of the French and Italian Communist parties. Thus they define the central aim of the anti-imperialist and democratic forces as "the undermining of imperialism, the strengthening of democracy and the liquidation of the remnants of fascism." Certainly, there is no indication here of a sharp turn back to the policies that characterized the earlier years of the Comintern. On the contrary, their effort carries forward under the new postwar conditions the line of the people's front, with the Communists as the backbone, which is characteristic of the entire epoch of anti-fascist struggle.

Furthermore, the nine parties hold to the perspective of continuing progress along this direction. For they see the struggle between the imperialist and anti-imperialist camps proceeding within the general environment of a deepening universal crisis of capitalism. The imperialist forces are weakened further by the spreading crisis, the democratic side is strengthened. Therefore, further democratic advances are inherent in the world situation, and these can be assured if the anti-imperialist forces are active to the full. What is required is political mobilization, immunity to blackmail and warmongering threats from the imperialist side, the spirit of the offensive, and confidence in the intrinsic strength of the democratic camp.

From this view of the situation the conclusion is drawn that the powerful forces on the side of democratic progress and peace can prevent the war danger from becoming imminent. The belligerent attitude and warmongering on the imperialist side are seen in part as an effort to obtain American expansionist aims by bullying and blackmail. Without discounting the danger of war, the nine Communist parties tell the democratic side not to get frightened or panicked, to remain firm and to build up their political strength. Accordingly, they do not describe the war danger as immediate. Neither do they hold forth the prospect that war can be held off indefinitely without a constant struggle against imperialist expansion and the jingoists.

ONE of the greatest mistakes that can be made on this side of the Atlantic is to view the Belgrade bureau as merely another Soviet maneuver in the game of world diplomacy. Some progressive circles tend to take this view, failing to understand the full meaning of our times. The nine-party statement is as much an expression of the views of non-Soviet Communists as of All-Union Soviet Communists. When they stigmatize American expansion as aggressive and dangerous to national sovereignty they convey the sentiments of many non-Communists also.

It is not a maneuver or a tactical trick when the Communists view themselves as defenders of national independence, as they showed themselves to be in the war against fascism and as they are again demonstrating in resisting colonization by Dollar Diplomacy. If progressives should insist upon the maneuver interpretation of history, they will fall into a trap of their own making. They will miss the entire meaning of American imperialist expansion with its new threats to peace and democracy, and will fail to understand the popular resistance aroused by it abroad. Some may even loss the will to fight reaction at home, while others may become easy victims to blind and senseless exhortations against "Soviet imperialism."

Nor can they afford to misread the trend of development in Europe because of an unreasoning faith in the right-wing Socialists of Western Europe. At a time when the Socialist governments of Britain and France are turning further to the right, Max Lerner (*PM*, October 7) passes judgment upon the nine-party statement by declaring, "European socialism is today, for all its divisions, the key to Europe's destiny." And with the same finality he urges the State Department to make a "basic alliance" with the Socialists of France and Britain. One of these fine days he will discover that the Communists are speaking not only for themselves but for a large sector of the Socialist following when they so sharply attack Bevin, Attlee, Ramadier and Blum as imperialist agents and instigators of working-class disunity.

American progressives can well afford to ponder this advice of the European Communists: "The main danger to the working class at the present consists in underestimation of its forces and in overestimation of the forces of the imperialist camp." This is not a pep talk. It is sober thinking. If we make this mistake we may become passive and defeatist, surrendering positions to reaction which it has not really won, and failing to take up the fight for positions that the progressives can win.

We cannot and will not resign ourselves to the victory of reaction in the United States. We will fight to prevent that victory. No less is at stake in our estimate of how things stand.

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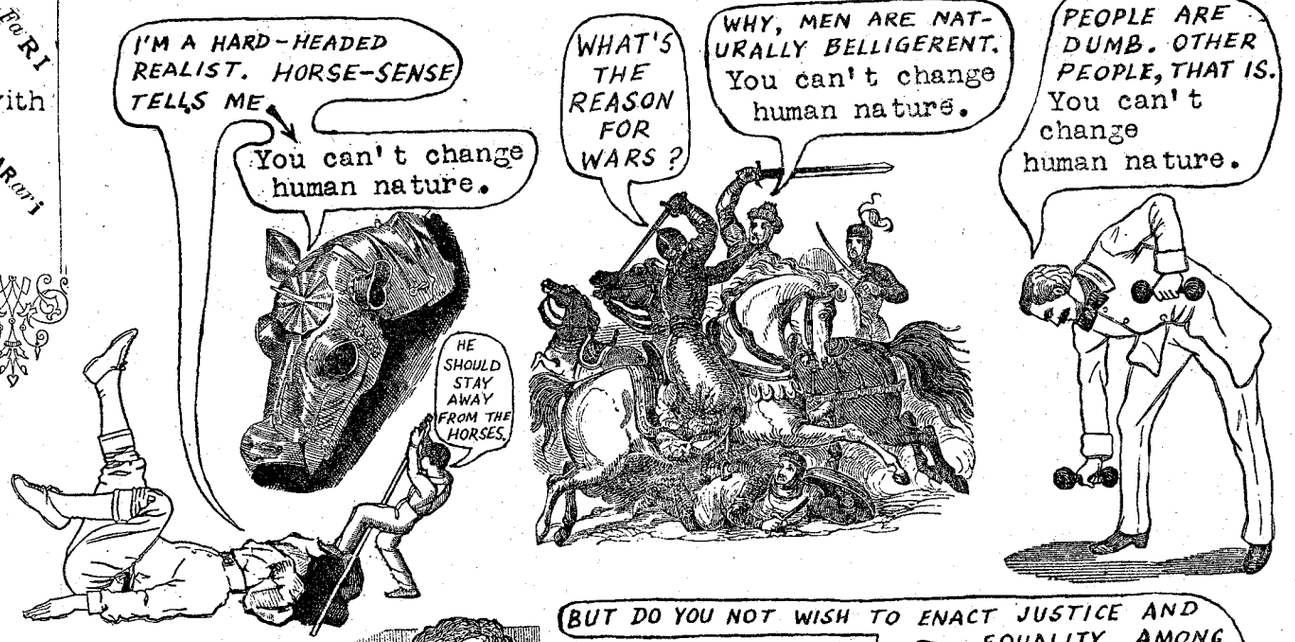
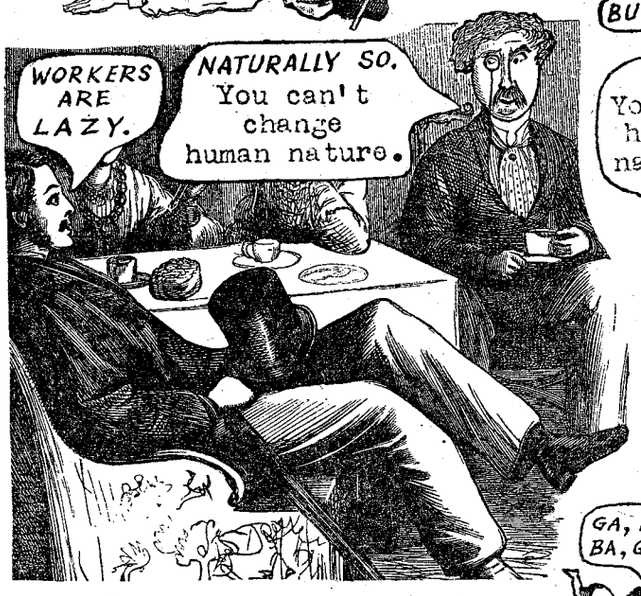
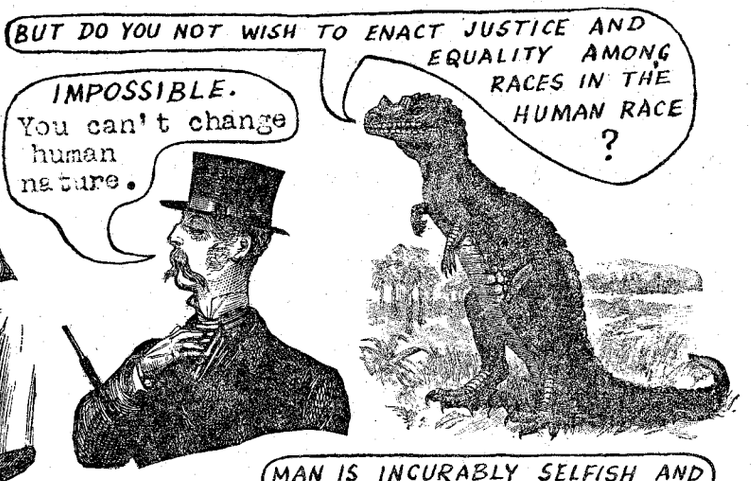
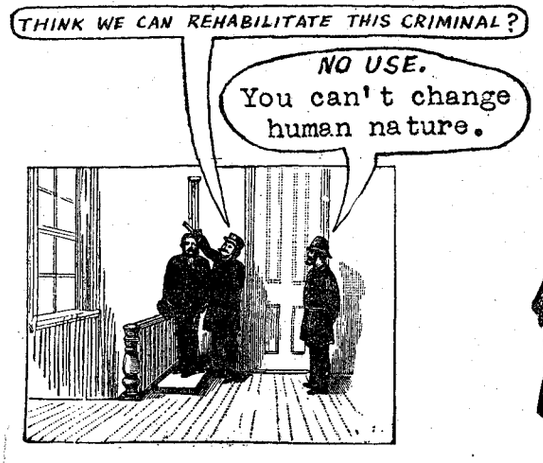
"You Can't Change Human Nature"

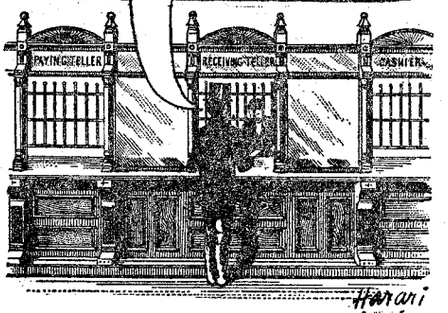
ON SAFARI with Harari


I'M A HARD-HEADED REALIST. HORSE-SENSE TELLS ME
You can't change human nature.
HE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM THE HORSES.
WHAT'S THE REASON FOR WARS?
WHY, MEN ARE NATURALLY BELLIGERENT. You can't change human nature.
PEOPLE ARE DUMB. OTHER PEOPLE, THAT IS. You can't change human nature.








DOG EAT DOG.... PROFIT MOTIVE... INDUSTRIALISTS — FLOWER OF EVOLUTION.... MOST NATURAL.... THE OTHERS — SWEAT, DEATH... COSMIC LAW. You can't change human nature.
PAYING TELLER
RECEIVING TELLER
CASHIER
Harari

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How Would You Look Under Kleig Lights?

By JOSEPH NORTH

TOMORROW or the day after they will be dragging the kleig lights to the front of a small chamber in Washington; they will have adjusted the delicate microphone so that the ears of 140,000,000 will catch every syllable of the grand American Inquisition. This time they will have dragged several score Americans across the continent from the film world and we shall be treated to the 1947 version of the exquisite art of browbeating Shirley Temple. In medieval days some deference to the sensibilities of mankind impelled them to don black masks to hide their faces and they carried on in a cell deep in the bowels of a castle. Today they work in neat double-breasted suits with benefit of high voltage and CBS. Mr. Stripling has his dossiers, Mr. Parnell Thomas his congressional immunity and America, the shame. Abroad a world inevitably recalls scenes in a Leipzig courtroom back in 1933 when a brawny thug by the name of Goering ranted in a Teutonic preview of what is developing in America today.

And one must ask, where is the conscience of America today?

I have, in the past fifteen years, come to know a good many writers, publicists, teachers and others engaged in the responsible task of influencing public opinion—men and women who were, in a major sense, custodians of America's conscience. Though my political views and theirs differed on a variety of issues, I regarded the majority of them with the respect due men of decency. They sought to examine the world rationally, scientifically, and they did not abjure identification with the great tradition—we shared the veneration of Tom Paine, Jefferson, Lincoln, Whitman, Emerson. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution were their fixed stars.

They would be horrified at a whisper that one might regard them in any other light. I met many such Americans in the course of the epic Scottsboro campaign; others I came to know on the picketlines in the middle Thirties. I treasure my recollections of some of them on the Spanish battle lines: and I know how they regarded Hitler. They have been partisans of the people's good, and they reflect, I am certain, the mind and heart of most of America's intellectuals. I recall the contempt they felt when our country heard the revelations of the Nye Committee and other bodies that probed the perfidy of our munitions magnates who plotted wars to coin profits; they knew the workings of Tom Girdler and his fellows who sought to corrupt America's working-class into a nation of Pinkertons and robots; they had no small knowledge of the mores of monopoly capital, and they scorned the course of an imperial America fashioned after the McKinley dream of "manifest destiny." They knew at least as much as their fathers knew: that Wall Street is not the custodian of our nation's interests. In Roosevelt's time they welcomed his chastisement of the economic royalists and identified themselves with his Economic Bill of Rights and his blueprint for a unified world.

It is to them I address myself. I want to speak with them of something that disturbs me and should, I believe, disturb them too.

PERHAPS I can best illustrate it with an episode that happened within the past few days.

A week ago I received a brief letter from a learned man, a luminary of the academic world, justly honored for his scholarship and revered, I am told, by his students. Author of respected books in his field, scholar of distinction, thousands regard him as a pillar of our society. I did too, until I received his letter: the more I think of it, the more shocked I am, for in his few sentences he revealed traces of a moral cancer which will, unless he checks it, devour his accomplishments and transform his undeniable talent for truth and good into mockery.

He wrote, in effect, that he could not appear at the meeting for Howard Fast because he held a post as professor in one of America's honored universities. "You must realize," he wrote indignantly, "that if I were to accept your invitation, it would jeopardize my standing." He assured me, however, that his sympathies were with the novelist and that he regarded the inquisitors in Washington as public enemies, latter-day equivalents to Torquemada. He expressed fears for our nation and for our culture. The words "thought control" appeared in his note. I must say, however, that his indignation seemed evenly and liberally allocated. With a remarkable even-handedness, he appeared as indignant with me for having invited him to protest the persecution of Howard Fast as he was with Howard Fast's persecutors. In short, he felt that expedience dictated silence and was indignant that I failed to see eye to eye with him. Furthermore, his note not only revealed something of the man: it was an indictment of our university life, so long regarded as the bastion of freedom in thought and speech.

Now I have no desire whatsoever to endanger his eminent career: on the contrary. I wrote him in an effort to help him in its defense. It is my conviction, and not mine alone (history since 1933 is irrefutable witness) that his fate is irrevocably linked with that of Fast's. Nor can silence rescue him: on the contrary. It is my conviction that the very act of silence unintentionally affords aid to the unspeakable Rankin—who will not, however, repay him with immunity. The logic of today's history is such that only those who run with the hounds and bay for blood will find sanctuary—in the kennel.

And I wonder how long it will take for intellectuals like him (and he is not, unfortunately, alone) to grasp that,

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totally, indelibly, and base their conduct upon it? What national calamity must we undergo before they fully recognize the imperative of our time? I cannot believe that I have totally misread my history: the lesson of Germany taught that the crematoria consumed all in full equality. Those who stood to a side, mutely, when life demanded they speak out paid enormously for their silence. Those who rejected common action against the fascist died separately, and died by the millions.

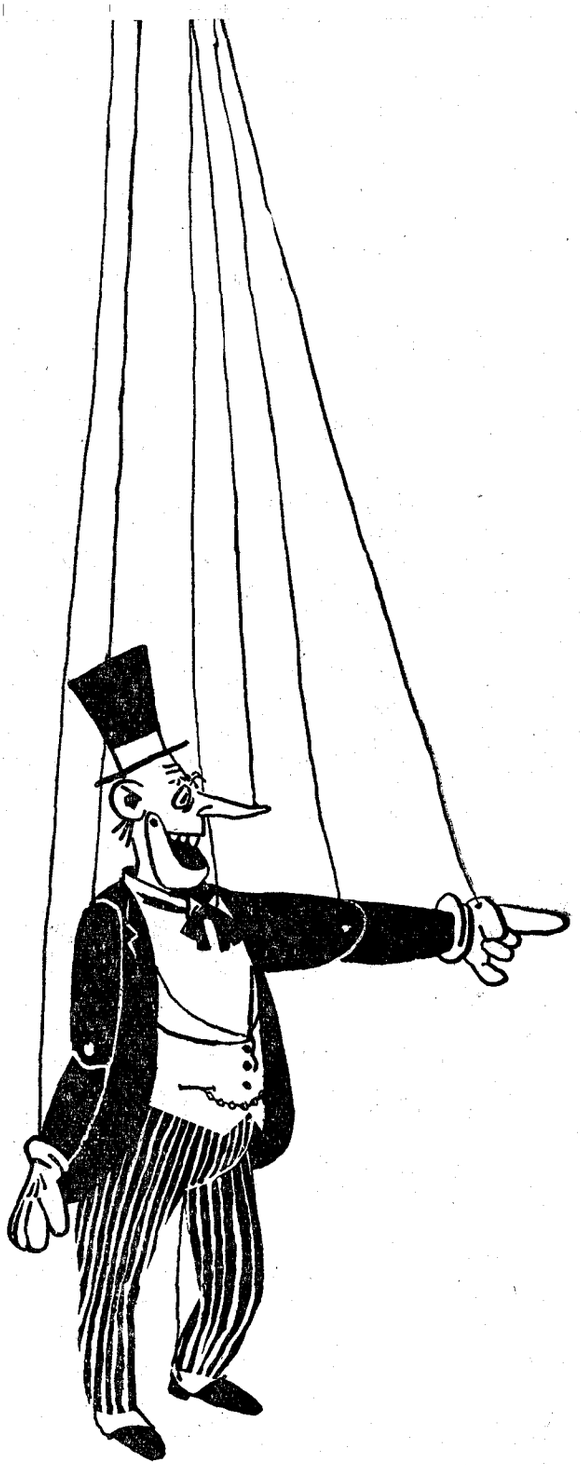
Nor can my friend argue, as some have argued, that when the time comes they will be found on the side of the angels. What time and when? The time, dear friends, is now—not tomorrow, not when it can be all too late. And I say *now* advisedly, for the storm signals are flying, and at the risk of repetition I must point to them and urge full speed.

I have spoken of the case of Howard Fast, whose crime is his integrity, whose sole misdeed is his rejection of the Rankin committee's invitation to betray the Republicans of Loyalist Spain. Would my university friend dare advise him to do otherwise? If, in all conscience, he could not, how dare he remain silent? If he felt, morally, that Fast should betray, then these words are not for him and we are not on speaking terms. But I know that he expected Fast to behave as he did, and since that is so he cannot escape his responsibility to defend Fast's action. For Fast was acting for him. Then I and others like myself have the right—and, I submit, the duty—to ask him to speak out; and he has not the right to refuse.

In recent weeks we have witnessed another instance of monstrous iniquity: the persecution of Hanns Eisler, the eminent composer, for no other demonstrable reason than that he is brother to Gerhart Eisler. I believe William Gropper said as much as can be said on this case: in his unforgettable cartoon in these pages recently he said that if Beethoven were alive today, he would be hauled before the kleig lights and the microphones for his Fidelio opera with its hymn to "freiheit, freiheit." That if Roget de Lisle walked the good earth in America today he would be manhandled by the barbarians of the Rankin committee for his heinous *Marseillaise*; that Chopin would be subject to deportation for his "Revolutionary Etude" and Verdi for his Garibaldi hymn. Into such deep mire has the Un-American Committee dragged our culture today.

I FIND it hard to accept the naivete of those intellectuals who misread the program of the monopolist: too much has happened since the turn of the century, and even in the past decade, for them to plead ignorance. I cannot, therefore, feel much sympathy for another writer who refused participation in the Howard Fast meeting on the grounds that he differs with me and certain other sponsors on our attitude toward Russia. I believe one can argue that this is the least satisfactory of all reasons for silence today, even though it is, perhaps, the most widespread. It is not my purpose here to argue Marxism, nor is it to defend the Soviet Union which has, as the past decade proved, ample capacity to speak for itself.

The issue under discussion here, gentlemen, is democracy in our United States. Differences on foreign policy are beside the point. Nor need one embrace the philosophy of the Soviet Union to defend civil rights in the United States. To believe otherwise is to plunge pell-mell into the booby-trap laid before America by our people's enemies. That is the Hoover line, the credo of the National Association of Manufacturers, who have shown monumental silence when proofs



George.

"Look, there goes another foreign agent!"

were made public that Standard Oil and other monopolies were "foreign agents" for the Nazi cartels.

I find it shocking that so large a number of intellectuals have abandoned their past knowledge, their painfully-acquired experience. It is as though Ivy Lee and his successors have cast a spell over their minds: have they really come to believe that John D. Rockefeller was the great philanthropist and not the Robber Baron? Have they come to believe that monopoly capital (of the Ludlow Massacre and the Chicago Little Steel murders) is a devoted guardian of our people's interest, our nation's security? And how can they argue, with any logic, that indeed, they distrust the monopolies at home, but that they are willing to support their policies abroad?

Let us put it briefly, in summary: is it too much to ask

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of our knowledgeable intellectuals that they reveal the same awareness shown by workingmen, such as the membership of the United Electrical Workers Union? Their resolution on foreign policy, overwhelmingly adopted at their recent convention, made one simple but telling point: the men responsible for assailing the standards of our people in America—the moneyed labor-haters (those who conjured up and railroaded through Congress the Taft-Hartley law) are the ones who mold foreign policy today. Those who profiteered monstrously on the war (who later destroyed price control and sent our nation into the inflationary tailspin) are at the helm of the Ship of State, dictating our relations with our allies of yesterday. The racists who menace the Negro people with faggot and rope are the loyal collaborators of those who would make war. This is the essence of the bipartisan policy: its face, as the UE indicated, is Hoover's, not FDR's. In brief, as Henry Wallace put it, "Under the Republicans Wall Street ran America: under the present administration Wall Street is all set to run the world." This, it appears to me, is the basis for understanding and casts light upon our commitments in China to fascist Chiang Kai-shek, upon our support of the Dutch against the democracy-hungry millions of Indonesia, upon our betrayal of the Jews in Palestine and our position on Greece and Turkey.

There seems a world of truth in an adage the electrical workers quoted, "He can't be a devil at home and an angel abroad." I would think this homily should be clear to any but the most naive, or the willfully blind.

Fortunately for America, and for our honor, the expressions of the writer cited above, and of our university friend, do not reflect a fixed, frozen position. Growing legions of intellectuals are pressing forward to have their say and to place themselves squarely against those who would drive our people into a postwar fascism. We refer to the anti-thought control conference to be held by the Progressive Citizens of America in New York October 25 and 26, and to the similar conference held recently in Hollywood.

And I am confident that many who still align themselves with the attitudes cited above will come to their senses and react in a way that Tom Paine and Thomas Jefferson would have reacted. Truth is that the democratic men, the peace lovers, the decent in spirit, are more powerful in their numbers and in the cogency of their thinking than ever in history. But they are still divided, reflecting the shattered coalition for which history will scorn Harry S. Truman. America's welfare requires their immediate mobilization for common, courageous action. That achieved, they will scatter the screaming witch-doctors now intoning at the image of the Golden Calf. The evil can win only if we are laggard in our responsibilities. If we permit the spell of the latter-day Ivy Lees to paralyze our judgment and our deed.

"The Whipper"

Why Negro veterans cursed when they heard that Col. C. W. Clark had been put in command of the Army's new guardhouse on Governor's Island, N. Y.

By CARL CARTER

His name is Lt. Col. C. W. Clark and Negro veterans hate his guts. From tenement-Harlem to the Mississippi lowlands the name is known, and uttered with hate. They remember him from the war days of the ETO when he was tagged "The Killer." And "Iron Jaw." And "Yellow Gloves." And "The Whipper."

Negro soldiers learned to hate him in England, and on through Normandy Beach to Marseilles, and they cursed when they learned that Col. C. W. Clark was chosen recently to head the Army's new guardhouse on Governor's Island, New York.

I know the colonel well. I served under him in 1943 and '44 and '45, when I was attached to the 545th Port Battalion. While our troops were battling on the front lines and while bombs were falling on England this man, through his bigoted policies, wasted our soldier manpower and our money. His inept leadership led through riot and mutiny to a state of chaos.

We first met Colonel Clark—then a mere major—when we relieved a white outfit in Bristol, England. He stood before us, dapper as a Hollywood soldier, his hands adorned by bleached yellow gloves, a polished black helmet-liner on his head, a thin switch-stick like a tiny restless snake in his gloved hands. We knew right then that we were up against an odd character, but how odd we really couldn't guess. The first act of this colonel (in conjunction with a Colonel Farris, an old-line Dixie soldier who was later transferred) was to change the prevailing rules of the camp, tailoring them drastically to fit the black troops. What had been permissible for the whites suddenly became impermissible and then and there began a virtual reign of terror against Negro troops in Bristol.

A lily-white overhead was created for the twelve hundred Negroes who comprised the 507th Port Battalion. Negro personnel was barred from Battalion Headquarters and Medical Detachment. The officers of the companies and of headquarters were all white—even the warrant officer.

At great inconvenience and a woeful waste of manpower there were established under Colonel Clark four categories of services to facilitate race-hate and segregation:

1. Separate living quarters for the white officers, separate living quarters for the dozen low-ranking whites of Battalion Hq. and Medics (sergeants, corporals and privates), and separate living quarters for the Negro troops.

2. A separate kitchen and mess hall for officers, a separate kitchen and mess hall for the handful of low-ranking whites, a separate kitchen and mess hall for the Negroes.

3. Separate shower-room for the

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officers, a separate shower-room for the low-ranking whites, a separate shower-room for the Negro troops.

4. A separate latrine for the officers, a separate latrine for the handful of low-ranking whites, a separate latrine for the Negro troops.

Next then, in the pattern of our hoary racists, there flowed lectures on social behavior and admonitions against socializing with the white women of England, properly interspersed with a word or two on the danger and horrors of lynchings.

Col. C. W. Clark felt strongly on the question of Negro soldiers mingling with "decent" people. Because the suburban district in which the camp happened to be located was peopled by decent folk the entire district was ruled off limits. Furthermore, there was established a boundary of ten feet inside the fence over which no Negro dared to step on pain of courts-martial. To speak to any civilian on the sidewalk —man or woman—constituted an offense punishable by courts-martial. The camp was tantamount to a prison.

When some hapless Negro sneaked out of camp in defiance of the oppressive regulations it often turned into a man-hunt that afforded Col. C. W. Clark no little amount of thrills. First the Negro would be spotted by Colonel Farris, who sat on the porch of his quarters the whole long afternoon, a pair of field-glasses to his eyes. When he spotted the Negro in his glasses he'd shout for Clark. Then the hunt was on—Col. C. W. Clark in his jeep, a forty-five on his hip, a tommygun in his hands; his chauffeur, a lean-jawed Negro-hater with the stripes of corporal, with a forty-five on his hip too. Off they'd dash, bouncing across the green golf links and into the wooded areas, in hot pursuit of the fleeing soldier.

The hunting of Negro soldiers went on in the daytime and at night. Some nights a posse of as many as six white officers, headed by Col. C. W. Clark, would go on a Negro-hunt in the woods surrounding the camp. Often their guns blazed at some terror-stricken Negro, admittedly to frighten the victim rather than intentionally maim or kill him. In a way, it was sport.

THIS was the leadership of Col. C. W. Clark over black American soldiers, who were working like mules in the stifling holds of the ships, and in the freight yards and warehouses. These Negroes heaved the bombs and the food, the tanks, the trucks, the jeeps, and they did outstandingly well; one company (the 545th) broke all records by unloading 207 tons in an hour.

The colonel's jeep driver, himself arrogant and bullying, did not confine his violence to the Negro troops but extended it to the British people as well. He assaulted a woman carrying her baby in her arms because the woman spoke to a Negro soldier while waiting for her bus. When that soldier protested, Colonel Clark's chauffeur drew his forty-five and leveled it at him. The Negro's life was saved, perhaps, by the timely intervention of Capt. E. K. Sewell of the 545th Company, who came upon the scene.

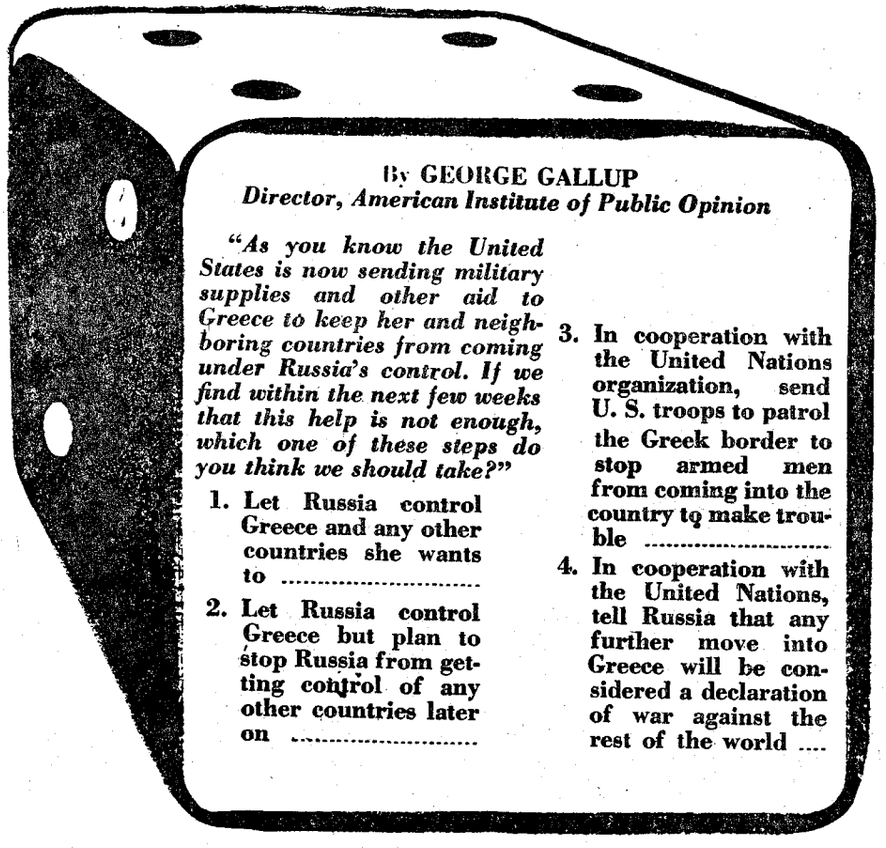
It was like that under the dapper Colonel Clark, also known as The Tommy-Gun Commander and The Iron Jaw. It was like that, and it grew even worse. Unbridled Jim Crow facilitated every other evil and corroded morale. While the handful of whites slept on cots the 1,200 Negroes slept on hard double-decker bunks that were closely jammed together. Through mismanagement the food of the Negro troops was intolerable. The handful of whites ate lavishly in their separate mess halls. They ate fresh eggs and steaks. The Negroes' food was of poor quality, slovenly prepared, and lacking in quantity. Epidemics of diarrhea occurred frequently. Sheer hunger brought about a number of raids on the mess hall, necessitating armed guards to protect the kitchen.

That's how it was under the colonel and finally the temper of the Negro troops spilled over into rioting. One evening practically all twelve hundred of them gathered together with bottles, stones and sticks, and went to the living quarters of the white leadership. They demanded an answer to their many grievances. But no answer was forthcoming. Colonel C. W. Clark, like the other white officers, remained in his quarters.

By the time a couple of Negro sergeants had persuaded the troops to avoid the blind use of violence a hastily-summoned riot squad arrived. At that point the colonel emerged and bravely ordered the white soldiers of the riot squad to train their machineguns on the backs of the withdrawing troops.

After that riot two Negro officers were assigned to the battalion. But the colonel could not change his spots. Instead of alleviating the race hate and

THE GALLUPING DOMINOES ARE LOADED



By GEORGE GALLUP
Director, American Institute of Public Opinion

"As you know the United States is now sending military supplies and other aid to Greece to keep her and neighboring countries from coming under Russia's control. If we find within the next few weeks that this help is not enough, which one of these steps do you think we should take?"

1. **Let Russia control Greece and any other countries she wants to .....**
2. **Let Russia control Greece but plan to stop Russia from getting control of any other countries later on .....**
3. **In cooperation with the United Nations organization, send U. S. troops to patrol the Greek border to stop armed men from coming into the country to make trouble .....**
4. **In cooperation with the United Nations, tell Russia that any further move into Greece will be considered a declaration of war against the rest of the world ....**

Question for next week: "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

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Jim Crow he resorted to more threats and more stringent regulations. Men were awakened at midnight for roll call formations. They were checked between midnight and 2 A.M. and again between 2 A.M. and 4 A.M., then again at 6 A.M., then sent to the ships to labor for twelve hours. When the general military curfew for Bristol was set at 11 P.M. the colonel made it 10 P.M. for his Negro troops. But added pressures only heightened the determination of the Negro troops to resist. They entered the forbidden neighborhood in growing numbers despite arrests and courts-martial.

The colonel then decided to erect a special pen which he called a stockade. It was an open structure on bare ground, walled in by high, interlaced barbed wire, and it was set in the center of the camp grounds for all to see and be frightened by what they saw. In this pen a prisoner was allowed only one bare blanket. That was his only protection from the cold ground and the frosty winds, from the biting English damp and the rains and slush of the seaport town.

Col. C. W. Clark was proud of this project. He supervised the building of it, step by step, with a profound interest, strutting around it, watching, directing, then standing back and gazing at it fondly. Then, as always, he cut a dashing figure, chest bulging forward, legs slightly spread, carrying switch-stick and yellow gloves and his polished black helmet shadowing his cold, steely eyes.

But as the pen neared completion the temper of the troops mounted. The first prisoners who entered the pen attained the stature of martyrs in the eyes of the entire battalion. In small groups the men milled about the place. Something was going to happen. Everybody sensed it, and now there were five more companies in the camp, all Negroes, making a total of 2,400 troops.

THEN it happened: the entire camp mutinied. When reveille sounded those 2,400 Negro troops refused to stir. It was organized mutiny—and a bare three weeks after the first riot.

In a state of near-frenzy Col. C. W. Clark issued order after order. But his orders were ignored, his authority disregarded. The colonel and his officers sweated and threatened and after three hours of threats and cajoling the companies crumbled and gave in, one by one, with the lone exception of the 545th Company. No threats budged the men of that outfit, and by five o'clock that evening the colonel conceded defeat by calling upon the High Command.

It was a victory for the troops for it broke the strict battalion censorship. A hearing before the High Command was now guaranteed. As a result of the mutiny the pen was razed and the Off Limits restrictions lifted. Nevertheless, 110 men were put under technical arrest for mutiny and/or conspiracy to mutiny. Action against all but two of these men was eventually dropped, but the two—a sergeant and a private—were tried by General Courts-Martial and found guilty. The sergeant was sentenced to twenty years in prison and dishonorable discharge; the private to life imprisonment.

This is but a small phase of Col. C. W. Clark's war record. It is not the whole story. Much can be said, for instance, of his vengefulness which led him to penalize the officers and men of the 545th Company because they held out and carried on the mutiny to success. The company got the dirty end of the stick on every turn. This held true starting with the choice of a new company commander and officers. The leadership dished out to that outfit was so poor that morale sagged and dragged and rotted to a state of near-chaos that threatened to end in the willful shooting of the company commander.

IN MARSEILLES, FRANCE, the vindictiveness of Colonel Clark unswervingly followed its course. The 545th Company continued to bear the brunt of his hate and his anger. Soon after arriving in the town twenty-one men were court-martialed for alighting from the box-car train at various times without official permission. Tried by Summary Court, these men were fined. But a week later they were again called to trial, on really the same charge, and this time sentenced to the Marseilles stockade, plus another fine.

This was followed later by what was perhaps one of the worst examples of military justice. A training camp for so-called incorrigibles was set up some miles outside the town by the High Command and sixty-three men were snatched at random from the 545th as incorrigibles and sent out to the camp for "corrective" punishment. Among these men were corporals and sergeants, wearing their stripes and giving exemplary service. One of them was a staff sergeant (ASN: 33007627), who headed the Third Platoon. These men were shanghaied to punishment though they were not charged with any misdemeanor and were innocent of any offense. When they returned from their punishment they were all arbitrarily reduced to the grade of private and transferred out of the battalion.

In the midst of democratic Marseilles Colonel Clark maintained his hate-fostering race standards. There was but one small shower-room in the camp for the battalion's 1,200 Negroes and thirty-five whites. A part of this room was speedily boarded off for the officers but its dimensions made impossible another division for the low-ranking whites. The colonel was faced squarely by this difficult military problem. How to make room for Jim Crow? Colonel Clark wrestled with this problem for a few days, during which the intense heat of Marseilles drove the whites to mixing in the shower-room with the Negroes. They all bathed together and nobody was the worse off for it.

But Colonel Clark finally issued his orders. The handful of low-ranking whites would have the shower one day a week to themselves. The 1,200 Negro troops would have it the other six days. This order didn't please anybody. In the sweltering heat the whites needed a bath oftener than once a week; the 1,200 Negroes coming off the ships needed the shower room every day. When feelings ran high and it began to smell like another mutiny Colonel Clark finally compromised. The whites will have their one day, he ordered; but their day will be cut short at 6 P.M., after which hour the Negro troops may use the shower.

This is but a brief glance at Col. C. W. Clark, who was elevated from the rank of major in 1945 after two exciting years of booting around Negro troops in the European Theater of Operations. He is known to be a foppish, switch-stick colonel, he is known to be a hate-fostering, gun-toting colonel. There should be no place of leadership for him in our armed forces; certainly he should not be allowed to command the new guardhouse at Governor's Island.

The War Department should give ear to the Negro veterans who know this man. We say he's bigoted and brutal. We know him. From Harlem to Mississippi we know him, and almost to a man we hate his guts.

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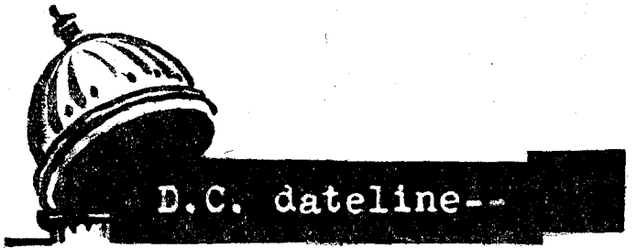


Poultry, Eggs and Soft-soap.

Washington.

THAT frenetic quality observable in the Truman administration's conservation campaign is due to the embarrassing discrepancy between its avowed and real aims. When a thief elects to escape capture, no one, you can be sure, will rush about more wildly nor shout "stop, thief!" more vociferously than the rogue himself. Mr. Truman and his advisers have something to conceal from the people. Therefore, they dashed into this thing headlong, with a lack of preparation which has proven costly.

A few of the consequences of their haste are merely amusing. The President appealed to the people by radio to eat neither eggs nor fowls on Thursday. The Department of Agriculture, which has just entered the market to buy turkeys in accordance with the farm price support law, immediately telephoned the White House. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day all fall on Thursday, and the traditional menu for these holidays constitutes the main demand for the American turkey crop. A further drop in turkey prices was involved. The White House ruefully granted a special dispensation.

Charles Luckman, the young soap magnate named by the President to head the conservation campaign from the outset, has been straitjacketed by Mr. Truman's choice of a *leit-motif*. He was constrained to formulate his directives to the people as "waste less" instead of "eat less," which is what is actually meant.

The waste-less slogan came about accidentally. Senator Taft, who has never been particularly responsive to the sentiments of income groups under the $10,000-a-year bracket, told reporters in a Western city that prices would come down if people would only eat less. It was an unhappy formulation and will plague him for the rest of his political career. When Mr. Truman broached the matter of high prices and foreign exports at his own press conference, a correspondent immediately asked if he meant people should eat less.

I stood only a few feet from Mr. Truman at that moment, and I would wager a Jackie Robinson autograph to the Brazilian forty-centavo Truman commemorative stamp that the President's answer was the product of a sudden inspiration. He turned toward the questioner, faltered, rubbed his hands together and exclaimed no, he was saying the people should waste less.

The high-powered advertising agencies which Luckman, as president of Lever Brothers, could command, found the slogan suggestive. But the Citizens' Food Committee, which includes representatives of consumers' groups, rejected the idea that keeping the lid tightly on the garbage can would feed the hungry, prevent war and save the world from communism. Experts from the Department of Agriculture, called in belatedly (although Secretary Anderson was a member of the top planning group), pointed out that for the great majority of consumers, wastage is a very minor item.

It was finally agreed that while the people would not be asked to eat less, they would be urged to eat less of certain foods, especially meat, poultry and eggs. On the big Sunday night broadcast Luckman stated it bluntly and the President, still cagey, asked for meatless Tuesdays and poultryless Thursdays.

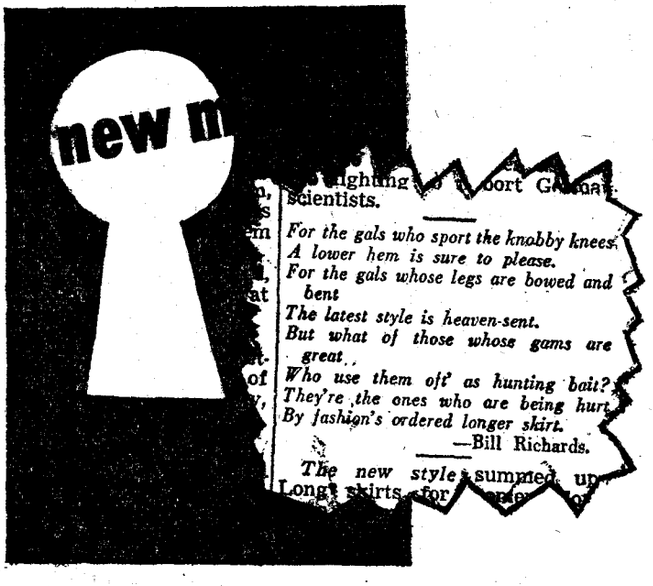
Washington correspondents are not always the bravest nor the most astute of men. But this, after all, was a little too thick. When we mushed over thick carpets last Monday into the office of Presidential Secretary Charles G. Ross, a veteran White House correspondent demanded why the President had changed his program.

"There has been no change," Charlie replied. "I think you are playing with words."

But President Truman unfortunately is playing with something more serious than words. If his appeal to the people to eat less fowl and fewer eggs should actually result in substantial reductions in the consumption of these foods, the farm price will fall below the figure of ninety percent of parity. Turkeys and eggs are already slightly below parity. When this happens, the government is obligated by law to begin purchases. One expert estimated the government may have to buy 20,000,000 cases of eggs. With cold storage warehouses already bulging with 66,000,000 pounds of frozen eggs bought by the government last spring, there would be no alternative except to feed many of them to the bonfires as we did potatoes in Alabama last year.

Ironically, this could happen while the prices of poultry and eggs are at a level so high as to be out of the reach of the average family. Parity prices are determined by the cost of things the farmer must buy, that is, the general level of prices. Every five-point rise in the cost of living index requires the government to add a cent to parity price of eggs.

To make a little sense of this chaos, wiser heads proposed


new n
scientists.
For the gals who sport the knobby knees
A lower hem is sure to please.
For the gals whose legs are bowed and bent
The latest style is heaven-sent.
But what of those whose gams are great
Who use them oft' as hunting bait?
They're the ones who are being hurt
By fashion's ordered longer skirt.
—Bill Richards.
The new style summed up
Long skirts

It seems that Walter Winchell, noted keyhole commentator and Red-baiter, will lift the skirt right off your back. The above clipping is from his column in the New York *Daily Mirror*, September 12. The lines are from Bill Richard's "Portside Patter" in NEW MASSES, September 9—used without credit to NM and without our permission, of course. When we demanded an acknowledgment Winchell, in his October 6 column, blamed one of his readers for the steal. One good thing: no matter how low skirts get they'll never reach his level.

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changes in the conservation drive. It is now reported that Luckman will concentrate more on bakers, millers, distillers. There will be a shift of emphasis from eating less poultry to eating less meat. There will be virtually no talk of waste.

WHAT is the reason for this fantastic flopperoo? What is Mr. Truman's guilty secret, the concealment of which precipitated him and his advisers into this ill-conceived campaign?

First, the President requires food experts not only to bolster unpopular governments in Paris and Rome that are ready to accept Wall Street dictation, but to consolidate American power in western Germany. More than half the food saved in the conservation drive will go to feed former members of the Reichswehr and their families, a fact which will not make left-overs more palatable to the average American family.

Second, although much of the talk is on the humanitarian level of feeding the hungry, the millions who are actually threatened by starvation are not in western Europe. They are in the Far East, in China and particularly in India where the monsoon and stem rust have played havoc with this year's grain crop. There is need for food in western Europe, but it cannot compare with the famine conditions expected in India where, under somewhat similar conditions in 1943-44, more than 3,000,000 died of starvation.

Third, the Communists whom Mr. Truman expects to "stop" with his program have the finest record for production not only in the countries where they share power, as in central Europe, but in France and Italy, where their return to a governmental role is warned against by Mr. Truman as akin to the black plague.

Finally, the President is acutely aware that without price controls and rationing, the export program is bound to push the cost of living to such inflationary heights as to threaten economic collapse. He is congenitally opposed to controls as an infringement on free enterprise. But more than that, he knows the Republican delegation would reject his foreign policy rather than reimpose controls.

Fearful of the consequences of his decisions, Mr. Truman sees the only alternative in distracting popular attention from the truth by a campaign which he hopes and prays—but which he knows in his heart will not—check the upward surge of prices.

A. L. J.

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WHAT I THINK OF NEW MASSES

A Letter from GERHART EISLER

To New Masses: Permit me to express my deep gratitude for the way your magazine reported my trial, with special reference to Miss Virginia Gardner. New Masses was the only magazine in the the United States which published the most important facts from the proceedings of this trial, analyzed those facts and drew from them the broader implications for the whole struggle in defense of civil liberties and against the insane witch-hunt and anti-Red hysteria. No other magazine, not even such magazines as the *New Republic* and the *Nation*, had the courage to say a reporting or concluding word to expose the campaign conducted against me for many months.

This trial, however, deserved some serious attention especially from the liberals because it cannot be denied anymore that the campaign against me as an "atom bomb spy," "agent of the Kremlin," "boss of all the Reds," and so on was only the introduction to the general attack of American reaction against the American people. The *Nation* and *New Republic*, at least, had no right to be silent, nor did the newspaper *PM*.

Friends in many European countries who are very much disgusted with my persecution learned about the trial through New Masses, and many letters from Europe have expressed admiration for your magazine.

It is not difficult nowadays in most European countries to read in American newspapers and magazines what American reaction and its fellow-travelers have to say. But it's much harder for Europeans to find out what progressive America does, thinks and writes. It is here that New Masses comes in. It is of great value for intelligent Europeans to read every week a progressive American magazine like yours that informs them about the most important political and cultural trends, about the battles on so many fronts, and which makes it easier for them to understand the complicated and contradictory American scene. And there are many more intelligent Europeans than official and unofficial American reactionary fools can ever imagine!

If all those in Europe who read your magazine, or would like to read it, could pay you in dollars your financial troubles would be easier. But unfortunately as long as this is not the case you will have in Europe a lot of admirers, but very little money from them. Maybe the Marshall Plan will be able to do something for New Masses in this respect!

Very often I am asked by my friends in Europe who read your magazine whether there is a danger that your magazine will be prohibited. When a European sees a wave of political suppression as is developing in the US he associates it at once, according to his own bitter experiences, with suppression of progressive magazines and newspapers. Whether this will happen to your magazine I do not know. Whether American democracy will sink so low as to allow such a dastardly thing to happen I dare not predict. After my own experiences with American reaction and with American authorities, I would only say everything is possible. I would not bet a penny with a hole in it about what dastardly things American reaction will not do.

There are other ways to make life for progressive magazines like yours a very hard one, a life always on the dividing line between to be or not to be. I mean the financial problem, especially at a time when the prices for everything become more prohibitive by the hour, and when a magazine without a lot of advertising is like a knight fighting against a man with a machinegun.

Oh, with what pleasure would American reaction and its "liberal" and Social-Democratic fellow-travelers greet the death of New Masses! They would prefer a quiet death for New Masses rather than its suppression by force, as it would give those hypocrites a chance to say a few pious words about freedom of the press, and freedom to succeed or not to succeed in the competition for readers and existence. For although the circulation of New Masses is still small—all too small—reaction has a fine instinct for who its decisive enemies are. That is one of the reasons why they are shouting themselves hoarse about the danger of the relatively small American Communist Party.

Five New Masses readers in a small American town will become an important factor in that town when the experiences of the masses matures, when all the demagogic windbags and hypocritical bubbles are tested and found to be empty nothings. And there are tens of thousands of such towns and hamlets, and tens of thousands of Americans who want to know the essence of what is going on and who will be grateful for a road-sign like New Masses.

To hold, and especially in the most difficult times, that which has been built up over so many years with pain, with hard labor, with great sacrifices, with changing success, until the time when the great harvest will come—this differentiates the real progressive from those who waver and wail because of mishaps.

The great ability to hold on, coupled with the ability to understand the problems, the real interests, the doubts and sorrows and pains of all those who are shaken and confused by the impact of events, by the noise of the demagogues, by the threats of the bigots—this great ability will be the magnet, the encourager, the organizer for all who are worried and are looking for the right way. We are learning from them that the way of life is more complicated than we sometimes think, and how much more is demanded from us to explain, to answer all questions, to organize and to give them confidence. And they will finally learn from us that the way of successful battle is simpler than they think—if many millions battle together.

For a New Masses with a hundred thousand circulation—to spite the disgusting, ridiculous enemy!

Gerhart Eisler.

Woodside, Long Island.

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The FOLK-SAY of FREEDOM SONGS

American folk song has always been closely in tune with political and economic attitudes.

By B. A. BOTKIN

Thank God-a-Mighty! Here's the Freedom Train!
Get on board our Freedom Train!

LANGSTON HUGHES.

FOLK SONG, like language, in Whitman's article on "Slang in America," is "not an abstract construction of the learn'd," but "something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground." Because the "final decisions" of folk song, like those of language, are "made by the masses, people nearest the concrete, having most to do with actual land and sea," American folk song has always had a close and reciprocal relation to social, political and economic attitudes and action.

From the beginning, a steadily growing chorus of people's voices has been raised in songs of freedom, culminating in our own day in People's Songs. These songs have helped to shape our notion and spirit of freedom, as freedom has contributed to our store of singable and significant songs. On the lips of orators—even the progressive but especially the reactionary ones—"freedom" is in danger of becoming a mere word, an abstraction. But in the people's songs "freedom" is more than a word—it is a call to action and an act—an act of liberating or being liberated from bondage and oppression.

Folk songs are by their very nature democratic in that they belong to the group and express group attitudes. And behind some of our best folk songs (including popular and national songs—let us not be academic in our distinctions) are groups and movements imbued and indoctrinated with the ideals of a free people.

In every age the form and style of folk song are conditioned by the culture, the literary and musical tastes of the present as well as the past. Because the seventeenth century was an age of faith and the eighteenth century, an age of reason and humanitarianism, two prevailing types of freedom song established themselves during the formative years of the American people and their struggle for independence. The one is in the tradition of the sacred song—the song of faith which uses song like prayer, to obtain spiritual freedom in the form of forgiveness of sin. The other is in the tradition of the satirical song, which uses song as a weapon of criticism, protest and reform. The two types—hymn and protest—have dominated our freedom songs ever since. Because religious revivalism and political reform both utilize songs of social significance and social action, there has been much borrowing back and forth between sacred and secular music and poetry in our freedom-song as in our general folk-song tradition.

So when one of our first people's composers, William Billings, the Boston tanner, hymn-writer and singing master, came to write what proved to be (according to John Tasker Howard) the "Over There" of the Revolution, he set new words to his best-known hymn tune, "Chester," beginning, in good old New England hymn style:

Let Tyrants shake their iron rod
And slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.

In the same way "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" grew out of a camp-meeting song, "Say, Brothers, Will You Meet Us," by way of a Massachusetts soldier's parody dealing with a Scotch comrade named John Brown, "John Brown's Body," and an abolition ode in honor of John Brown of Ossawatomie, by Edna Dean Proctor, both written to the same tune. Not so very different and no less sure was Joe Hill's instinct in parodying "In the Sweet Bye and Bye" in "The Preacher and the Slave."

The mood of satire—lampoon and parody—in American freedom songs was established by "Yankee Doodle." Itself a British satire of the new Americans, originating (according to tradition) in a British army surgeon's amusement at the motley provincial troops during the French and Indian wars, it gave rise to many folk developments and parodies, both American and British. Provincial national anthem, marching song, political song, it is said to have begun and ended the Revolution—the proverbial expression of Brother Jonathan defying John Bull.

MOST of these Revolutionary songs were true ballads of the broadside variety, growing out of the event. A list of titles reads like a roster of heroes and heroics: The Ballad of the Tea Party, the Ballad of Bunker Hill, the Death of Warren, Nathan Hale, Riflemen's Song at Bennington, Paul Jones' Victory. Many of the heroes themselves wrote songs: Joseph Warren, "Free America"; Tom Paine: "The Liberty Tree" and "Bunker Hill"; and Francis Hopkinson (one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence), "The Battle of the Kegs." And in the "battle of ballads" between the Sons of Liberty and the Tories, beginning with John Dickinson's "The Liberty Song," broadsides were bullets.

With the War of 1812, Americans began to swagger on the sea as well as on the land, in naval victory songs like the rollicking "*Constitution* and the *Guerriere*" and the challenging "Ye Parliament of England":

I often have been told
That the British seamen bold
Could beat the tars of France neat and handy, oh!

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But they never found their match
Till the Yankees did them catch,
For the Yankee boys at fighting are
the dandy, oh!

Ye Parliament of England
You Lords and Commons, too,
Consider well what you're about,
And what you're going to do;
You're now to fight with Yankees,
I'm sure you'll rue the day
You [illegible] the sons of Liberty
[illegible] America.

The popular spirit that may be detected in this indictment of the British government produced, in another War of 1812 ballad, "Patriotic Diggers," a new kind of freedom song in praise of "Men of every age, color, rank, profession" who volunteered to build fortifications when the British fleet threatened the city of Philadelphia (or New York, according to one account):

Plumbers, Founders, Dyers, Tinmen,
Turners, Shavers,
Sweepers, Clerks, and Criers, Jewelers, Engravers,
Clothiers, Drapers, Players, Cartmen,
Hatters, Tailors,
Gaugers, Sealers, Weighers, Carpenters, and Sailors.

Pick-axe, shovel, spade,
Crowbar, hoe, and barrow,
Better not invade;
Yankees have the marrow.

Meanwhile, when tyranny threatened at home in the form of the Alien and Sedition Laws, the song "Jefferson and Liberty" lashed out against the bigotry of the Federalists:

The gloomy night before us flies,
Its reign of terror now is o'er;
Its gags, inquisitors, and spies,
Its herds of harpies are no more!

Rejoice! Columbia's sons, rejoice!
To tyrants never bend the knee,
But join with heart, and soul, and voice,
For Jefferson and Liberty.

No lordling here, with gorging jaws,
Shall wring from industry the food;
Nor fiery bigot's holy laws
Lay waste our fields and streets in blood!
Here strangers from a thousand shores,
Compelled by tyranny to roam,
Shall find, amidst abundant stores,
A nobler and a happier home.

"Jefferson and Liberty" and the Federalist song "Adams and Liberty" marked the moment of birth of the campaign song; and to patriotic and national songsters were now added political songsters, swelling the chorus of a new kind of freedom song, whose motivating force is implied in the "Liberty Battle-Song," on the eve of the Civil War:

Come from your workshops and the fields,
We've sworn to conquer e'er we yield,
The ballot box is Freedom's shield,
Arise! arise! arise!

Thenceforth, songs, like slogans, helped to make and unmake Presidents.

Our first labor songs — another type of freedom song — were folk songs. In the case of the sea chanty they also happened to be work songs, gang songs; but under the guise of singing at work the sailor also gave expression to his grievances. Out of

"Peasant Cutting Corn," pencil drawing by Vincent Van Gogh. Least known and most ignored of the artist's works are his drawings of peasants and miners, showing in reproduction at the Tribune Subway Art Gallery through October. Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo: "No result could please me better than that ordinary working people should hang such prints in their room or workshop. Of course a drawing must have artistic value, but in my opinion this must not exclude the condition that the man in the street shall find something in it. The price of the prints must not be more than ten cents, at the most fifteen."

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the brutal conditions aboard the packets, in the Liverpool trade following hard upon the War of 1812, came "Blow, Boys, Blow," which the "packet-rats" originally took over from the Congo slave traders.

Solo: A Yankee ship came down the river,
Chorus: Blow, boys, blow!
Solo: Her masts and spars they shine like silver,
Chorus: Blow, my bully boys, blow!

How do you know she's a Yankee liner?
The Stars and Stripes float out behind her.

And who d'you think is the captain of her?
Why, Bully Hayes is the captain of her.

Oh, Bully Hayes, he loves us sailors;
Yes, he does like hell and blazes!

And who d'you think is the mate aboard her?
Santander James is the mate aboard her.

Santander James, he's a rocket from hell, boys,
He'll ride you down as you ride the spanker.

And what d'you think they've got for dinner?
Pickled eels' feet and bullock's liver.
Then blow, my bullies, all together,
Blow, my boys, for better weather.
Blow, boys, blow, the sun's drawing water;
Three cheers for the cook and one for his daughter.

The fancied bill of fare runs into tall tale, consisting variously, according to Joanna C. Colcord, "of 'belaying soup and monkey's liver,' 'mosquito's heart and sandfly's liver,' 'hot water soup, but slightly thinner,' etc." This grotesque mixture of humor with criticism, of realism with fantasy, runs throughout the hard-hitting songs of other labor groups—the lumberjack, the cowboy, the coal miner, the wobbly, the sharecropper, the Okie. It is in the satirical tradition with a new twist—the trick of what Zora Neal Hurston has called "hitting a straight lick with a crooked stick."

Irony is perhaps best illustrated in Negro songs of protest, in the double meaning of the blues and the spirituals. And in the symbolism of the latter we return full circle to where we began—the mixture of the sacred and the secular in the struggle for spiritual and bodily freedom. For the spirituals, as Alain Locke has pointed out, borrowed not only their tunes and their symbols from the Christian tradition, but also the method of the "dramatic sermon which was the illiterate or semi-literate preacher's version or dramatic expansion of his testament text." The result is that instead of "merely dialect versions of evangelical Protestant hymns," we have, in the narrative spirituals, a native balladry converting Biblical symbols of freedom and the old Bible stories into folk poetry of a high order.

A notable example of the type is "The Walls of Jericho," in which the walls that come tumbling down are the walls of slavery. And if the walls are interpreted as the walls of Jim Crow, according to the *People's Songs Wordbook*, the song, like every great freedom song truly interpreted, "immediately becomes a great fighting song."

The final lesson of the freedom songs of the Negro is the lesson of all freedom songs in America. Just as the slave, in Alain Locke's words, "did not get his democracy from the Bill of Rights" but "got it from his reading of the moral justice of the Hebrew prophets and his concept of the wrath of God," so our songs of freedom, from the American Revolution on down, are part of our folk Bill of Rights, hymning eternal and basic concepts of social justice. They are part of our folk-say—what the people have to say about themselves, where they came from and where they are going—in their own way and in their own words. Whether in folk song or folk tale, freedom song or any other kind of song, the best folk-say has the forthrightness, tang, and tone of people talking, the immediacy and concreteness of experience participated in, the lift of common ideals shared, and the salty irony and mother wit which do not depend on books for their nurture. They are the best proof of the truth of the words, of the unknown author quoted by Carl Sandburg: "Orators die, pass out, and their tongues turn to dust, but the people live on. Humanly speaking, they are the eternal element."

The folk-say of freedom songs is also folk history—Everyman's history, for Everyman to read—in which the people are the historians as well as the history. In it has been recorded the tortuous progress of freedom in America, every inch of the way, as it takes two steps backward for every step forward. And like all history this freedom-song history is as true for us today as it was for those who lived it and wrote it. As part of our democratic heritage, it belongs to the present and future as well as the past of American freedom, with the survival power of the people themselves and the people's indomitable faith, will, humor and courage.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

The director of the Washington Zoo says that food bills will be twice as high this year. He should be able to cut down a little while some Congressmen are away.

•

Howard Hughes' publicity man has been seized on a paternity charge. Leave it to a publicist to pop into the headlines.

•

The Army is going to eliminate certain "errors" in the treatment of enlisted men. They did not say how many of these brass hats would be retired.

•

Representative Taber says that he did not see any undernourished people in Europe. He hasn't learned to distinguish between people who have enough to eat and those who are fed up.

A number of local groups have demanded that we establish a United Nations with teeth. The grim alternative is a world with nothing but cavities.

•

A long series of operations has enabled a man to taste food for the first time in twenty-six years. If food prices keep rising it is likely to be a short-lived triumph.

•

Screen actress Greta Garbo is visiting Europe. Maybe she wants to be a loan.

•

A statistician claims that New Yorkers alone throw out a million pounds of waste food a day. In all fairness it should be pointed out that this garbage often includes the newspaper it is wrapped in.

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review and comment

HANNS EISLER'S CASE FOR CULTURE

A brilliant, witty book on film music by the noted composer who challenged his inquisitors to read it.

By S. FINKELSTEIN

COMPOSING FOR THE FILMS, *by Hanns Eisler. Oxford.* $3.

IN *Composing for the Films*, Hanns Eisler has extended the discussion of a specific problem in one branch of art to reveal the contradictions that rend the whole world of culture today.

Eisler describes how the quality of music written for the movies depends upon the character of the movies themselves, and how the character of the movies depends, in the main, upon the society that produces them. "The motion picture cannot be understood in isolation, as a specific form of art; it is understandable only as the most characteristic medium of contemporary cultural industry." Along with the other "popular art" manufactured by big business, backed by torrents of advertising and publicity and by the cheapness of mass production, it has raised almost insoluble problems for the serious artist who wants to reach a public. "Since Strauss, all really modern music has been driven into the esoteric."

The motion picture has much to offer the musician, among other things a living wage and a mass audience. But let the composer not kid himself, says Eisler, that he can reach any respectable artistic heights by approaching the public through this medium. He is treated as a "unique" artist, by the movie industry, only when it comes to denying him trade-union protection. Otherwise the industry reserves the right to cut, change, mangle and destroy his work. The motion picture is shaped by the contempt for art, for honest human documentations and emotional realism of the businessmen who run it.

It is the last stage in bourgeois art, where all the techniques, idioms, forms, discoveries in realism of the art of the past are synthesized into one great mass of sense-appeal from which honesty has fled. "The historic processes that can be perceived in cinema music are only reflections of the decay of middle-class cultural goods into commodities for the amusement market." A composer can do his work with artistic integrity, but the product is necessarily restricted in quality. "Fundamentally no motion-picture music can be better than what it accompanies. Music for a trashy picture is to some extent trashy, no matter how elegantly or skillfully it has solved its problems." Nor is the public to be blamed for the trash, although the producer often likes to pass the buck. "The argument of the advocates of the existing motion-picture music is: 'The people want to have it this way, otherwise it won't go.' In other words, they invoke the expert's appraisal of the audience, *which always amounts to shrewd manipulation of the public.*" (Italics mine, S. F.).

Starting with this analysis, Eisler demolishes the pretensions of traditional movie music even to serve adequately the present motion picture, and then builds up a case for the use of "modern music," which to him means predominantly atonal music of the Schoenberg school. The great mass of Hollywood music, he points out, consists of cliches, quotations from past music, elaborate combinations of sound hushed so that they are barely heard, all of which communicate nothing.

Nor is serious composition in the traditional, diatonic manner possible, for the structure of such music depends upon a long process of harmonic movement which cannot suit the swiftly-changing scenes of the motion picture.

The case he makes for atonal music is a strong one. Its independence of classic harmonic designs makes it admirably suited for short, dissolving scenes. It is capable, as no other music is, of the utmost emotional concentration in a short space. It allows opportunities for the freshest, most economical use of musical instruments and re-

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corded sound. Its seemingly esoteric character is no objection. As Eisler points out, "In a petrified and stationary system the most practical idea may seem eccentric, and at the same time the most extravagant fantasy can come close to realization, thanks to a sudden technical advance." I would agree that atonal music is by far the best suited to give a true emotional commentary, a human poignance, to the superficial, intense naturalism of the great majority of present-day moving pictures.

But is not this usefulness itself a limitation of the music? Just as Schoenberg is the pure Wagnerian, carrying the Wagnerian musical methods to their logical conclusions, so Eisler's concept of a naturalistic cinema combined with an expressionistic atonal music is the final extreme of the Wagnerian music drama. And the pessimism from which Schoenberg's music rarely breaks away is the pessimism of a mind too wholly occupied with bourgeois culture. Eisler's own description of this music indicates its predominant quality. "The fear expressed in the dissonances of Schoenberg's most radical period far surpasses the measure of fear conceivable to the average middle-class individual. It is a historical fear, a sense of impending doom."

EISLER does not share the pessimism of other artists in exile. He affirms a belief in a better world and better culture. But he is not sufficiently aware of the contradictions operating both within the moving picture industry itself, and within contemporary music. The field-day he has in lambasting the pretentiousness, the ostentatiousness, the idiocy and vulgarity of the cinema is a joy to follow. But a struggle is taking place: there is, on the one hand, a demand for more truthful movies, and on the other an entrance of human realities through the work of the writers, dialogue specialists, directors and even actors, who bring a realistic and humanly folk quality into the art which was not planned by the producers. Accordingly, there is the possibility for the growth of a music that will be folkish, popular, yet written with distinction, vivid and optimistic in its human imagery.

Eisler, in his approach to film music and to modern music in general, suffers from a misunderstanding of the national and folk in music. To many modern German thinkers, liberal and even Marxist, the "national" implies either something primitive or reactionary. It is a misunderstanding of the national question, both in respect to politics and to culture, a misunderstanding that has been fortified by the Nazi perversion of national culture and national freedom into its opposite of jingoistic nationalism. Unlike some other Schoenberg followers, such as Krenek, Eisler admires musicians of another esthetic such as Bartok and the early Stravinsky, but he still seems to recognize in them only those qualities in which they accidentally parallel Schoenberg.

These limitations are most obvious in Eisler's critique of Eisenstein and Prokofiev, based on the film *Alexander Nevsky*. He would be on firm ground if he were content to point out that the methods here used to unite picture and music are not the only ones possible. He denies them any validity, however. Yet this work stands up, as film, music and a combination of both, as few works do in the entire history of film music. This is an esthetic fact which cannot be theorized away. Eisler makes a great contribution when he points out that music must have a dialectic, not an imitative or repetitious, relation to the film; it must in a sense be the "opposite" of what the eye sees, adding a new commentary, so that music and picture will combine in a higher unity. He does not see that this level is possible on a higher plane than that of each moment of the scene. His arguments are much like those of post-Wagnerian opera and song writers, so obsessed with naturalism of word and action that all formal structure melts away. It is easy to find seeming esthetic deficiencies in a Mozart or Verdi opera, a Schubert song. What critics forget is that the audience is always ready to accept visual and verbal conventions, as well as musical ones, for the sake of a higher unity, a deeper musical and artistic experience. Eisler is too much impressed with the need for full and immediate communication. This is important, but if great music is written for film, it will have to reveal its full message, as in great opera, on many hearings—not just one.

It is a neat irony that on the one hand this book was made possible by a project financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, and at least in part teaches how bourgeois art can be made better bourgeois art; and that on the other hand Eisler is being threatened with arrest by Tom Clark and the Rankin committee. It is no news to Eisler, of course, that if some sections of the moneyed people are still interested in culture, it is the culture-hating barbarians who hold the political reins. He can recognize the same grinning, gun-fingering ape he faced and fought in Germany. And he has given no quarter in this book. While he does not mention any specific contemporary political problem, he leaves no illusions that monopoly capitalism is anything but destructive of art. It is a brilliant, compact, witty book, not to be swallowed uncritically, but offering a real education to the reader interested in modern music, the film industry or any facet of art in contemporary society.

I Remember

LINDEN ON THE SAUGUS BRANCH, *by Elliot Paul. Random House.* $3.50.

A GOOD deal has been written on the growth and culture of big cities as they affect the city-dweller. But our literature is remarkably deficient in either describing or explaining what happens to a small town during the change from practically self-sustaining farming-fishing community to suburb. Since Linden, Mass. (just outside of Boston) was going through that process while Elliot Paul was a boy, we now have such a description, set forth with the detailed, perceptive good humor with which Mr. Paul usually writes.

Over it as one reads hangs a haze of more than nostalgia. There are also the mists of the autumn marshes, the steam from a hundred chowder-pots, the exhalations of beer glasses at the Massasoit House. Between the continual "scandals" that rocked the town and the refuge offered by wood and water and marsh, Linden sounds like an exciting place in which to have grown up.

It is only as one begins to think back on the book that one begins to wonder whether the author is not too uncritical of Linden—to which he accords the honored place of "mama" in all the other "I remember" books. It is obvious, on this second thought, that by the turn of the century the small-holding tradition in an industrial region had worn thin. The "respectable" people of Linden by that time had turned at least crotchety, if not downright neurotic, in their efforts to maintain an earlier way of life. Their minds turned perpetually back on themselves or pried unceasingly into their neighbors' lives. Indeed, the main anecdote of the book concerns a young

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MISS BAXTER'S FEAR

The following is a review of *Clarkton*, reprinted from the Cincinnati, Ohio, *Enquirer*. We cannot understand the cause of Miss Baxter's fear, unless the truth is something to fear. We believe *Clarkton* presents the *truth* of the American dilemma—and we believe you will not be afraid to sample it.

"This is a book which simply cannot be reviewed either dispassionately or objectively. If you are a Communist, you will think it is wonderful; if you loathe Communism, you will detest this book with a hatred so strong that it will leave you feeling physically sick.

"Written by one of America's foremost Fellow Travelers, this novel about a strike in a small New England town is a brutal piece of writing that will shake anyone reading it. Without apology, it presents the Communist side of the labor trouble as the only right side.

"I should like to use some bald quotes to show exactly what I mean. The following sentences are quoted exactly with no words either omitted or added:

" *'But there's only one place I met with the brotherhood of man, and that's in the Communist Party.'*

" *'In the party, like Christ says, all men are brothers, and I seen the white and black shake hands and die for each other.'*

" *'He turned over in his mind his own relationship to an organization that had earned for itself more abuse than any other since man's beginning, except possibly Christianity itself.'*

"The foregoing examples are typical of the ideology that permeated this book, and the theme of the message Fast is trying to convey is consistent throughout.

"My one comment is that I was sick after reading it, and that my sickness was a result of fear."—Maxine Baxter in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, Sept. 27, 1947.

CLARKTON, by Howard Fast . . . Duell, Sloan & Pearce . . . $2.75.

schoolteacher who went off into a coma for months because a horsecar driver wrote her name on the snow in an easy but vulgar fashion. Her sister and mother were such "cases" that they resented all efforts but their own inept ones to bring the girl back to consciousness. Indeed, her sister tried a stabbing to prevent help. And the schoolteacher herself recovered only after being taken in hand by an intelligent, likable woman who nevertheless, by Mr. Paul's account, sounds like a classic example of unconscious Lesbianism.

Along with a few remains of village friendliness and cooperation in Linden, there went a violent isolationism. "Mama" Linden refused to recognize the existence of the Irish immigrants across the tracks. "Mama" Linden viewed with terror the arrival of a colony of Italians on the edge of town. Even those Lindeners whom Mr. Paul most admires, who found "Mama" Linden too narrow and gathered at the Massasoit bar, who had learned to drink with the Irish and eat with the Italians, were as violently anti-Semitic as anyone when the dreadful possibility arose that a Jew might move to Linden. Mr. Paul's "happy" ending consists of the discovery that the mysterious purchaser of a vacant lot was not a Jew but a Linden property owner in good standing, who was keeping quiet for charitable reasons.

It can, of course, be argued that Mr. Paul is describing, not condoning, a village life at the turn of the century. But there is an air of benign neutrality about the whole book—almost of the same approval that the author has heretofore reserved for anti-fascists in *The Life and Death of a Spanish Town*, for the intellectuals, trade unionists and beautiful girls of *The Last Time I Saw Paris* and for the somewhat zany heroes of his whodunits. If you want to check your critical brains and follow Mr. Paul through the labyrinth of incident from which he constructs his book, you can enjoy yourself—temporarily.

SALLY ALFORD.

"Unsolvable" Problem

THE WAY OF THE SOUTH, *by Howard W. Odum. Macmillan.* $3.

PROFESSOR ODUM has been studying the South for forty years and his work must be read with the respect and care engendered by that fact. It is, therefore, the more disappointing to find oneself in sharp disagreement with the essential thesis of his latest book, representing, as it does, the summarization of his most recent thinking.

There is, of course, much of value in Odum's book. His chapters on religion—of such key importance in the hitherto predominantly agrarian South—and on folksong as expressive of the deepest yearnings of the sorely-tried Southern people, will benefit anyone attempting to understand the area. And keen flashes dot the narrative, such as the insight into "the long, long inner conflict between Negro women and white women," while those familiar with the writing of Odum will expect evocative prose and they will not be disappointed.

Yet, as we have indicated, the work is unsatisfactory. Symptomatic is the fact that Odum's chapter "The Grandeur That Was Not," devoted to the exploiting and oppressing features of the Old South, consumes a total of ten pages, while "The Glory That Was the South" — with the Colonel, his lady and the faithful black servitor, complete to magnolia and mint-julep—requires twenty-five

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Read the book Vishinsky quoted!

JAMES ALLEN'S

"WORLD MONOPOLY AND PEACE"

Said Mr. Vishinsky, in his UN speech:

". . . therefore it is no accident that James Allen in his book, **'International Monopolies and Peace'** . . . quotes from the report of a government body . . . some extracts which lead to the conclusion that only under conditions of war is the modern economic system capable of securing an approximately full employment."

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pages! And while several of the quoted songs hint of mass resistance, no space at all is devoted to this epic story, so important an element in "the way of the South."

Such treatment flows logically from Mr. Odum's basic postulate of a "regionalism" devoid of class content, and of an oppression that springs from assumptions and ideas. Fundamental and primary to him are mental images: "Basic elements in the problem," he writes, are "assumption of superiority for one's own kind and group; assumption of the right to dominate the assumed inferior; assumption of the right to exploit the assumed inferior."

It is from these mental images, apparently spontaneously or miraculously generated, it is because of them that material—political, social, economic—inadequacies and maladjustments appear. Given such an idealistic or mystical pattern—with the truth, as Marx once remarked, "standing on its head"—the difficulty represents, once again, as with Myrdal, a dilemma. By careful count, Mr. Odum uses this word "dilemma" nineteen times to summarize his opinion of the situation, and once we are told that America faces in the South a "double and triple dilemma"! The matter is made really quite explicit for at one point Mr. Odum announces the so-called race question to be an "unsolvable problem."

Related to this approach is the author's "regionalism and planning" concepts which are iterated and reiterated throughout the book. To him "regionalism provides the only way to an enduring and effective redistribution of wealth," the job being to prevent the draining of "some regions to the benefit of others."

To one dealing with concepts, images and assumptions as basic, primary social driving forces and to one ignoring the socio-economic realities of life, such regionalism and such planning are sensible. But to one who is concerned not with the *concept* of regionalism, as such, but with the *people* living in those regions, the property relationships existing there and the consequent class-relationships, and the *fact*, the *reality* of the absentee ownership of most of the decisive elements of Southern wealth, to such an individual the ideas of regionalism and planning, divorced from material considerations, become devices for obfuscation, postponement and, finally, for maintaining the status quo.

In an ultimate sense assumptions and prejudices do not create oppression and maladjustments. No, oppression and maladjustment, essentially based upon social organization, create such assumptions and prejudices. Certainly there is interaction here, for we are speaking dialectically, not mechanically, but, we repeat, the images and ideas are derivative, are secondary, are phenomena of response.

Unless one sees this then indeed the question of racism—as of exploitation and all social and historical problems—is "unsolvable." In this case we may forthwith adjourn to the Stork Club or to a Cuban estate, or, for those of more modest means, we may blow out our brains—useless and troublesome organs that they are!

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Official Version

STRUGGLE FOR GERMANY, *by Russell Hill. Harpers.* $3.

MR. HILL naively accepts all the exaggerated, self-righteous claims of our military government officials of Germany. He insists that they have accomplished a most thorough job in democratizing, denazifying, demilitarizing and decartellizing that country.

But the facts prove the contrary. Had Hill understood the part played by American monopolies and financial interests in directing policy in Western Germany, he might have presented interesting analyses of the use of the "Red menace" to delay necessary social reforms and to avoid any consequent land reform or nationalization of businesses and industries that supported Hitler's wars of aggression and profiteered from the Nazi plunder. He would have recognized, too, that in the hands of the reactionary German officials—with the connivance of our military government—the "denazification program" is becoming the screen behind which German big businessmen are exonerated or given some petty punishment.

Hill, of course, is annoyed with the Russians and attacks them sharply for extracting "exorbitant" reparations. He makes no attempt, however, to explain how it is that despite reparations, the Russians in their zone have eliminated unemployment, maintained food rations and surpassed all the other occupying powers in reconstruction.

The author brazenly libels the German Communists by linking them with

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the Nazis as similar enemies of democracy, making no mention of the Communist leadership in the anti-Nazi opposition and in the formation of the anti-Nazi front after the war and neglecting to present an objective analysis of the platform of the Communist and Socialist Unity Parties. On the other hand, he comes out in support of the Social Democrats, conveniently forgetting their past betrayals and blunders. Evidently with Hill, as with other Red-baiters, the evil the Social Democrats do does not live after them. In addition, he fails to investigate their present-day compromises with reaction and the increasing disparity between their handsome words and not so handsome deeds.

In his lengthy discussion of the formation of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin, Hill presents the official military government version, giving no analysis of the intensive anti-Communist program of intimidation, cajolery and bribery conducted by the British and Americans which resulted in the unfortunate split among the workers of the German capital.

For all the superficiality of his analyses and his failure to establish connections between isolated facts and general developments, Hill arrives at several praiseworthy observations. He notes the justification for the fears on the part of the Soviet Union concerning the motives of the United States and Britain, opposes the establishment of a federalized Germany and urges American acceptance of the necessity for socialization in Germany. His book thus ends on a fairly positive note.

ARTHUR D. KAHN.

Not Forgotten

GREEN MEMORIES, The Story of Geddes Mumford, *by Lewis Mumford. Harcourt, Brace.* $3.50.

LEWIS MUMFORD'S book is a loving, gently-written biography of his son, who was killed in action on Mount Altuzzo in Italy at the age of nineteen. For us Americans, so interested in the sensational intimacies of celebrities, of big guys, this book can help channel our natural curiosities to more rewarding contemplation. We need more books that will tell us warmly, in individual terms, about our struggle for a better life—a cause for which Geddes Mumford died.

It can be expected of a man like Lewis Mumford that he has given thought to his life, and certainly he demonstrates that he and his wife extended thoughtful care to their son's rearing. Thus, we begin with the preparations for Geddes' arrival, the feeding schedules, the worries about the possible psychological reverberations of his childhood illnesses, the problems of "progressive" education; the cares of parenthood permeate the book to culminate in the terrible anxiety familiar to all whose children fought in the war.

Through photographs, letters, notes kept on his development and through the sensitive recollection of his parents one gets the story of his simple outward life—his life in the city, the summers and later years in the country, a full, active yet unsensational life. Geddes comes alive—and one gets to know him well—as a fine, handsome young man, perhaps too morally self-preoccupied, but with a sure sense of wanting to lead a life of use to his fellow men. He flowers into manhood in the Army and the gift of his life, his ability as a good infantryman, is his contribution.

Although Mr. Mumford does not mean this to be anything but an individual biography, though his concern with social history and moral problems is well known, he keeps us constantly aware of the fate the world was making for a generation growing up during the rise of fascism. Yet the detail of Geddes' childhood, intimately told, the long sketches of his life in the country, beautiful as they are, mix uneasily with the random commentary on the state of the world. It is as if Mumford were not aware exactly at what point Geddes and the world met. Possibilities are missed: the social and psychological problems that Geddes meets in "progressive" and formal schools are, for example, only described so that Geddes' difficulties remain, by inference, his alone.

But this is an honest, moving book and Geddes' life, individual though his immediate background was, comes across inevitably as illustrative of the growing problems of a generation that fought well against fascism. As a child he said, "When I get big, I'm going to stop anybody from making war." "How?" his parents asked. "I'm going to get a gun, and any time I see anybody who wants to make war, I'm going to shoot them dead." Geddes' fight still goes on; those who win it will remember him.

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sights and sounds

THE TROUBLED ASTRONOMER

Donald Ogden Stewart's amusing and timely play asks intellectuals some embarrassing questions.

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

YOUR reviewer doesn't get to first nights. NEW MASSES is on the second night list, which includes magazine critics, second-string radio commentators, literary agents, film scouts (as distinguished from the executives, who rate first night), miscellaneous celebrities and a somewhat less swanky than first night run of paying guests. Having crashed a few first nights I have had the opportunity to make comparisons. I can report no great difference between the two beyond the fact that on first nights considerably more bare female and evening-black male backs are to be seen. The accompanying loud-voiced intellectual display, with contemptuous or condescending comments and general bad manners, is about the same on both nights. The rule of good taste for these audiences appears to be to like as little as possible, particularly of whatever has the warmth and the odor of life.

This was given illustration in the reviews and at the proceedings of the first night performances of Donald Ogden Stewart's fine play, *How I Wonder*. A description of an episode during these proceedings may provide clues to the muddled and insensitive reactions of the New York critics. It will give a sense of the spiritual climate in which they function.

On the night I saw the play a couple behind me worked hard and loud not to enjoy the play and to overawe others into not enjoying it. They began at the beginning and, after a promise not to come back after the first act, they persevered to the end. They conceded one man of their acquaintance might enjoy the play, but he had "admitted" being "communistic" (the greatest contemporary crime and *faux pas*). "How dull!" they kept exclaiming, and repeated the current cliche by which condemnation can be achieved without a bill of particulars: "Bad theater!" However, in the second act, following the appearance of the attractive Meg Mundy, some "oohs" and "ahs" over her figure and her gown interspersed the disparagements.

The pressures exerted by this sort should not be underestimated. Thought control in America becomes successful because official procedures are translated into social procedures by such people, who domesticate the F.B.I. mind in the lobbies and parlors. At a time when a book critic opens a review with the theorem that a Communist is unsuitable to be the principal character in a novel, when another demands that a publisher print a progressive writer's dossier on the jacket blurb, when a distinguished composer is ordered deported — but there is no need to go on. In the present spiritual climate of America it is obvious that critics are not likely to respond to a progressive play like *How I Wonder* with anything but prefabricated frost.

Such a response must have come all the readier to the critics in retaliation for the rebuke implied in the play. For *How I Wonder* dramatizes the dilemma of the intellectual in this day when reaction is trying to drag us into an atomic war. The intellectuals, the critics of course among them, must know the consequences, must be aware of the accelerating drift to disaster. Such knowledge, as Mr. Stewart tells them, imposes a responsibility to do something to stop it. By showing the course of the conflict in the mind of one intellectual, who sweated it out and acknowledged and accepted the responsibility, Mr. Stewart puts the problem to all intellectuals—including the critics—"How about you?" I'm afraid their estimate of the play was colored by their resentment over this challenge, over its reminder of other evaded problems and other shirked responsibilities.

MR. STEWART's troubled and troubling intellectual is the astronomer Professor Lemuel Stevenson. Up to recently he has led the placid life of an academic adjusted to the society fringe status and the genteel poverty of a university career. When problems had come up he had dodged them with a wry joking which was another form of the rationalizations used to get around such embarrassments. So it went until the atom bomb came and the War Department invaded the universities. After that Professor Stevenson began asking himself and others disturbing questions. His joking became so wry that the college authorities began worrying. How about kicking Stevenson upstairs and out of the way, into the presidency of a more obscure university? And if that doesn't work how about a psychiatrist's help in readjusting the dear fellow to his environment? And if that doesn't work how can the scandal be minimized of firing a popular and respected professor?

Tangled up in these dilemmas is certain news awaited in the heavens. According to Professor Stevenson's calculations a new planet should appear in a certain position in the sky. The sky area in which Professor Stevenson expects it is being photographed night after night. The timely appearance of the new heavenly body

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saves the professor, for the publicity is too precious to the university to risk it by firing the discoverer.

However, the new heavenly body that appears on the photographic plates is not a planet. It is a star. It seems to have made the suicidal error Earth is verging upon—of indulging itself in the destructive folly of atomic war. The planet has exploded into a star.

At the time of the discovery of the star Professor Stevenson (effectively played by Raymond Massey) has lost the offered university presidency by his joking at the expense of the offering millionaire trustee and is on the way to losing his professorship as well. But he discovers that he has misjudged his wife, behind whose skirts he has dodged when in need of a rescuing rationalization (his duty as the provider).

The play develops much of the way in acute and entertaining dialogue between the professor, his Mind (hilariously personified by the actor Everett Sloane), and his Conscience, which Stevenson names Lisa (alluringly personified by Meg Mundy). With comically relevant symbolism the Mind, in his efforts to detour the professor from dangerous thoughts, makes frequent use of parody verses of Kipling's "If." It all proceeds with a remarkably unbroken flow of wit that sharpens into significant comment and tenses into emotional crises like Stevenson's own wry joking.

How I Wonder, however, is not without faults. It is not a well-made play. Its structure could well have been tighter. Its fantasy sometimes confuses rather than enlightens. The professor's wife is given so one-sided a presentation that the sudden revelation of another side comes as an unconvincing surprise. Lisa is unclear. She may be taken as Conscience. But she may also be a mere dream figure—or something portentous, like a messenger from the atomized planet, using the astronomer to deliver a warning to the Earth. The haze over the conception tends to float off into mysticism.

But these are deficiencies of something done at a high level, difficulties met on a long mental reach. *How I Wonder* takes a place among the important plays of our recent theater.

THE week in which *How I Wonder* opened was a busy one. There were three other openings, of which William Wister Haines' *Command Decision* was the most important. Its theme turns on a plan to bomb out Nazi jet plane factories before their production can restore air mastery to the Luftwaffe. Because the American raids must be carried out beyond fighter escort range they involve high losses. In the reports these do not look good to Washington, to Congressional Committee junketers and to the higher command concerned about careers. Intimate emotional tension is provided by decisions that wreck old friendships and include close relations among the human "expendables" — a situation that is rather hoked up here, as it usually is on the stage.

Command Decision is above average and a very well-made play. It is "good theater"—in fact, to the point of being an almost mechanical instrument for the accumulation of tension. It has a few unusual moments but its larger intentions—if we may assume them—are not achieved. If the intention was to indict the Army brass it is negated by the examples of Army brass that actually glitter. If the intention was anti-war, then its examples of callousness, bloodiness and careerism are balanced by gallantries that romanticize war. Summed up, *Command Decision* is a well-made but minor and rather pointless war play. The acting by Paul Kelly, James Whitmore, Jay Fasset, Paul McGrath and the others of the all-male cast was of top quality.

"THE HEIRESS," the dramatization by Ruth and Augustus Goetz of Henry James' *Washington Square*, went along nicely until it stretched the delicate implications in the story into crudely interpreted Freudian ranges. This ruined what promised to be a play of considerable subtlety and charm. If *The Heiress* survives it will be by grace of the extraordinary performance of Wendy Hiller and the able support she receives from Basil Rathbone and Patricia Collinge.

"MUSIC IN MY HEART," which attempts to use Tschaikovsky as Grieg was used in the popular *Song of Norway*, surpasses its model in one respect: vulgarity. Tschaikovsky's melodies continue to sound good, but the trivial lyrics written to them by Forman Brown, and the buffoonery with which Tschaikovsky's tragic life is exploited in Patsy Ruth Miller's book, are a continuous offense.

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